

**SUMMARY OF THE  
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING  
APRIL 11-12, 2000**

The Proficiency Testing Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met at the Westin Hotel, Denver, CO, on Tuesday and Wednesday, April 11th and 12<sup>th</sup>, 2000. The meeting was led by its chair, Ms. Barbara Burmeister of the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The main purpose of this meeting was to address comments and to prepare for the NELAC VI Annual meeting in June 2000.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Ms. Burmeister began the meeting by reviewing the agenda. After the NELAC Vi interim meeting, comments and questions on Chapter 2 were received from A2LA, Oregon Environmental Lab Association, Arkansas Department of Health, Quanterra (now STL), Catalyst Information Resources, Absolute Standards, New Jersey DEP, Florida DEP, California ELAB, Chrisope Technologies, SPEX, Pennsylvania DEP, STL Savannah, USEPA and the Illinois EPA. Committee members reviewed these comments and questions and presented responses and/or suggested changes for their assigned sections of Chapter 2 and each appendix. The primary changes to the chapter and appendices and related discussions are summarized below.

## **SELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS**

Several candidates were nominated for membership in the PT Committee. As of July 1, 2000, one voting and one contributing member are needed. In addition, Michele Kropilak of New Jersey resigned, so another voting member is needed. Committee members voted to fill the three open positions. An alternate for each committee position was chosen in case the primary was unable to accept membership. Ms. Burmeister will contact the nominees.

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF DISCUSSIONS**

### **Section 2.0, Interim Standards**

From the comments and questions received, it is apparent that the PT Provider Accreditation Program needs to be rewritten so it is very clear. Additional NELAP analytes need a NELAP designated PTOB/PTPA. This committee has the most knowledge to determine if an organization meets the requirements of Appendix D to become a PTOB/PTPA. Section 1.6.1 clearly states that the NELAC BoD has the overall responsibility and authority for the supervisory, administrative and procedural duties associated with NELAC. Therefore, language will be developed for the PT Committee to evaluate an organization and then nominate the organization to the NELAC BoD to be designated as a PTOB/PTPA. The final decision will remain with the NELAP Director. This language will be developed for Section 2.2.2 and D.0. The current Section 2.0, Interim Standards will be deleted and new language will be added to a new section entitled "PT Provider Accreditation" in Section 2.3.1. Ms. Burmeister will draft a letter to the NELAC BoD recommending A2LA as a NELAP designated PTOB/PTPA.

## **SDWA Regulation and Chapter 2**

After a lengthy discussion, the committee decided to add “method” to the PT field of testing for all programs, not just SDWA. This will prevent the confusion that currently exists because chapter 1 and 2 are not consistent. The members of the committee representing both accrediting authorities (AA) and laboratories supported this change based on feedback received from their respective groups. Many comments and questions were also received on the issue of RCRA-water versus RCRA-solid for both accreditation and proficiency testing. Because the current scope of accreditation is program-method-analyte, both labs and AAs are confused about PT sample requirements for labs testing both RCRA-water and RCRA-solid. To make the chapters as consistent as possible, the committee will ask Chapter 1 to add “matrix” to the field of accreditation. For the chapter changes submitted for the annual meeting, two options will be presented:

Option 1: Chapter 1 will add “matrix” to scope of accreditation and Chapter 2 will add “method” to PT field of testing.

Option 2: If Chapter 1 does not add “matrix” to scope of accreditation, Chapter 2 will still add “method” to PT field of testing and the following sentence will be added: “Note: PT sample matrix shall be appropriate for the intended use of the method.”

Both options will have the following note: “Note: Laboratories are permitted to analyze and report multiple method specific results for the same analytes from one PT sample.”

## **Chapter 2, Sections 2.1 through 2.7**

Ms. Cindy Nettrour highlighted comments received regarding these sections. With the exception of Sections 2.1.3, PT Field of Testing, Section 2.2.2 and 2.3.1 regarding PT Provider Accreditation, no changes were proposed for the rest of Chapter 2.

## **Appendix A**

There were no comments received and no changes are proposed.

## **Appendix B**

Ms. Marykay Steinman reviewed the comments and questions received regarding Appendix B. Recurring issues are the definition of sample matrices and the composition of solid matrix PT samples. Language will be added to Section B.1.3 to clarify PT sample matrices and availability of PT samples. A new section, B.1.4, will be added outlining the sample composition for solid matrices. Clarifying language will also be added to Sections B.2.2 and B.4.

## **Appendix C**

Mr. Matt Caruso outlined the comments regarding Appendix C and the NELAC PT FOT tables. Two errors were found in the tables. An errata sheet for the February 2000 tables will be developed and will be sent to Ms. Jeanne Hankins for posting on the NELAC website. The issue

of the effective date of additional matrix or analyte groups was discussed. Language will be added to Section C.4.1 when these additional groups become effective. The issue of bimodal distribution in PT data was also discussed. Language will be added to Section C.4 to clarify this. Regression equations for UCMR analytes were discussed. The committee will defer this issue until either the NELAP AAs or the EPA have a pressing need.

## **Appendix D**

Ms. RaeAnn Haynes highlighted the comments to Appendix D. With the exception of D.0, no changes are proposed. The NVLAP oversight of PT providers is becoming a concern since no response has been received from NVLAP regarding the results of PT provider testing. Ms. Burmeister will draft a letter to Doug Faison of NVLAP asking him to provide a timeline of provider oversight.

## **Appendix E**

Mr. Matt Caruso reviewed the comments and questions to Appendix E. The committee discussed each comment and no changes are proposed to Appendix E at this time.

## **Appendix F**

Dr. Faust Parker was unable to attend the committee's face-to-face meeting, but joined us via teleconference. The committee reviewed the proposed changes to the EPA WET National Standards that Dr. Parker will submit to the EPA. The committee concurred with his changes. The standards when final will be incorporated into Appendix F. At this time, no changes are proposed.

## **Appendix G**

Mr. Chuck Wibby briefly highlighted the status of Appendix G. No new comments were received since NELAC Vi so no changes are proposed. This appendix is ready for vote at the annual meeting in June.

## **Appendix H (Air)**

Ms. Lara Autry reviewed the revised Appendix H. No new comments were received since NELAC Vi so no changes are proposed. This appendix is ready for vote at the annual meeting in June.

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

Ms. Marykay Steinman outlined the current status of the PT FAQ. There is considerable confusion regarding how to comply with both the new SDWA regulation and the NELAC PT requirements. A FAQ (#2) will be written addressing this issue. A FAQ (#11) will also be written addressing the issue of PT sample requirements for laboratories analyzing RCRA-water only, RCRA-solid only and both RCRA-water and RCRA-solid. Ms. Burmeister will revise the FAQ, send them to the committee for approval, and will then send to Ms. Hankins for posting on the NELAC website. Ms. Burmeister will also contact Ms. Lisa Doucet to see if the FAQ can be

included in the participant information given out at NELAC VI. The PT process flowchart developed by Mr. Larry Jackson will be revised and posted on the NELAC website with the PT FAQ. Ms. Burmeister will email Mr. Jackson with the changes needed.

### **Report for ELAB**

At the ELAB meeting at NELAC Vi, Ms. Burmeister was asked to develop a report regarding problems or shortcomings of the NELAC PT program. The committee started to compile a list of these issues. Ms. Burmeister would like the report finalized by the end of May.

### **Miscellaneous**

Ms. Burmeister will revise the NELAC VI agenda. The next committee teleconference meeting is scheduled for May 2, 2000 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. EDT.

## ACTION ITEMS

**PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING  
APRIL 11-12, 2000**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Date to be Completed</b>
1.	Ms. Barbara Burmeister will contact the nominees for the <sup>4/27</sup> open committee positions.	4/21/2000
2.	Mr. Chuck Wibby will develop language for Section 2.2.2 and D.0	4/21/2000
3.	Ms. Barbara Burmeister will write a letter to the NELAC BoD recommending A2LA as a PTOB/PTPA for NELAP.	5/5/2000
4.	Ms. Barbara Burmeister will contact Marcia Davies of Chapter 1 and propose the addition of "matrix" to field of accreditation.	4/14/2000
5.	Mr. Chuck Wibby will develop an errata sheet for the 2-2000 PT FOT tables and send to the committee.	5/5/2000
6.	Ms. Barbara Burmeister will send changes to the PT Process flowchart to Larry Jackson for correction.	
7.	Ms. Barbara Burmeister will revise the PT FAQ, send it to the committee for approval and then to Ms. Jeanne Hankins for posting on the NELAC website.	
8.	Ms. Barbara Burmeister will contact Ms. Lisa Doucet to see if the PT FAQ can be included in the NELAC VI participant information.	5/1/2000
9.	Ms. Barbara Burmeister will email Mr. Faust Parker for comment resolution regarding Appendix F.	
10.	Ms. Barbara Burmeister will draft a letter to Doug Faison of NIST requesting a timeline for oversight of the PT program	
11.	The committee will complete the report for ELAB on problems and issues related to the NELAC PT program.	

**PARTICIPANTS  
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING  
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<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Address</b>
Burmeister, Barbara      Chair	Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene	T: (608) 265-1100, ext. 107 F: (608) 265-1114 E: burmie@mail.slh.wisc.edu
Autry, Lara	USEPA/OAQPS	T: (919) 541 – 5544 F: (919) 541 – 1039 E: autry.lara@epa.gov
Caruso, Matthew	NY State Dept. of Health	T: (518) 485 – 5570 F: (518) 485 – 556 E: caruso@wadsworth.org
Haynes, RaeAnn	Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality	T: (503) 229-5983 F: (503) 229-6924 E: haynes.raeann@deq.state.or.us
Jackson, Larry (absent)	Environmental Quality Management, NH	T: (603) 924-6852 F: (603) 924-6346 E: lpjackson@msn.com
Nettrour, Cindy	American Water Works Services Co., Inc.	T: (618) 239 – 0516 F: (618) 235 – 6349 E: cnettrou@bellevillelab.com
Parker, Faust	Espy, Houston & Assoc, Biomon. Lab	T: (713) 977 – 1500 F: (713) 977 – 9233 E: fausteha@wt.net
Rhyne, Anne      Board Liaison (absent)	TX Nat. Res. Conserv. Comm.	T: (512) 239 – 1291 F: (512) 239 – 2550 E: arhyne@tnrcc.state.tx.us
Rucinski, Bob (guest)	RT Corporation Laramie, WY	
Steinman, Marykay	M. J. Reider Associates, Inc.	T: (616) 961-4713 F: (616) 961-7530 E: bcoyle2152@aol.com
Wibby, Chuck	Environmental Resources Association	T: (303) 431 – 8454 F: (303) 421 – 0159 E: qcstds@aol.com